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Rettie - Interior 5634

SECRETARY UDALL ASKS STUDY OF FEDERAL PREDATOR CONTROL

For many years animal lovers and conservationists have raised questions whether the Government is doing "too much"--to the point that some species are being endangered by the control program. At the same time, some farmers and ranchers have asked that the Government do much more, especially to prevent large crop losses from massive bird damage. The Leopold Committee will attempt to answer such questions.

Secretary Udall asked the Committee these specific questions:

1. What should the Government's role be in providing protection to people, game, and livestock from nuisances and depredating birds and mammals? Does the Federal Government have an obligation to provide these services on private lands as well as public lands?
2. If this is a proper function of the Federal Government how far should it go in providing these services?
 - A. Should it be limited to a program of research to find the best control methods and the publication and dissemination of this information? What additional research is possible in areas such as range ecology and predator damage in order to better determine whether or not control programs are needed?
 - B. Should it go further and provide an "Extension Service" type program on the Missouri model?
 - C. Should the Federal program provide services in the range and magnitude of the present program? What changes should be made in the present program to meet current and long-range need?
3. Should control program services be provided to any segment of the population that will provide the funds, or only after an examination of the situation revealed that there was a need for the work?
4. Since the type of services provided by the Predator and Rodent Control Branch are closely connected to agriculture, should the Branch activities be a part of the Department of Agriculture?
5. Does the Branch of Predator and Rodent Control have a definite, long-range goal? If so, do the various districts have operational plans that will achieve these goals?
6. Have shifting agricultural and populations patterns resulted in a similar adjustment in Branch operations?
7. Are any species of wildlife, harmful or beneficial, being endangered to the point of becoming scarce or extinct either directly or indirectly through Predator and Rodent Control operations?

The Committee report is expected in six to eight months.

In addition to Dr. Starker, members of the special committee include Dr. Ira N. Gabrielson, Vienna, Va., President of the Wildlife Management Institute; Dr. Clarence Cottam, Sinton, Tex., director of the Welder Wildlife Foundation; Thomas L. Kimball, McLean, Va., executive director of the National Wildlife Federation; and Dr. Stanley A. Cain, Ann Arbor, Mich., professor and Chairman of the Department of Conservation, University of Michigan.

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